

## **CLYDESDALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

**Policy:** Remote Working Policy

**Date:** 30 April 2025

**Lead Officer:** Chief Executive

**Review Date:** September 2026 (review date aligned with Blended Working Policy)

**Regulatory Standard 3: The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.**

### ***Guidance***

- 3.1 The RSL has effective financial and treasury management controls and procedures, to achieve the right balance between costs and outcomes, and control costs effectively. The RSL ensures security of assets, the proper use of public and private funds, and access to sufficient liquidity at all times.
- 3.6 The governing body ensures that employee salaries, benefits and its pension offerings are at a level that is sufficient to ensure the appropriate quality of staff to run the organisation successfully, but which is affordable and not more than is necessary for this purpose.

**Clydesdale Housing Association will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages.**

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## Introduction and Background

Remote working is where an employee works away from their employer's location for all or part of their working week on a permanent or ad hoc basis. The practice has been around for a long time but has become increasingly popular used to promote flexibility within the workplace, attract, and retain talent within the workforce.

Remote working can be:

- An original contractual arrangement from when the employee commenced employment,
- requested by an employee as part of a flexible working statutory entitlement,
- a reasonable adjustment
- a change in organisational culture to provide employees with choice and utilise the benefits of remote working
- implemented by Clydesdale Housing Association, following the necessary consultation and contractual change processes
- used as a mechanism for employee and public safety in the event of a public health emergency or other exceptional external circumstances

There are two types of remote working:

- **Occasional:** employees have a contractual work base (i.e. office location), but work remotely on an ad hoc basis, through informal arrangements with their team and line manager.
- **Contractual:** employees that work off-site as defined in their contract of employment for a specified period of their working week.
- **Hybrid:** employees work between their office base and remotely depending on the needs of the business and the employees' personal circumstances

## Policy Principles

*Clydesdale Housing Association's* Remote Working Policy aims to:

- Benefit the business from creative solutions, ideas and projects by allowing staff to do these remotely, without interruptions.
- Respond to external circumstances which necessitate working from home for a prolonged period of time
- Ensure our high level of service is maintained at all times.
- Better meet the demands of our service requirements.
- Promote our culture of inclusion.
- Integrate into and complement our health and wellbeing strategy.
- Support and embed our commitment to our environmental sustainability practices.
- Set out the parameters to ensure the above conditions are met.

## Health & Safety

A health and safety assessment will be carried out according to *Clydesdale Housing Association's* health and safety checklist (Appendix 1), which covers VDU risks and general precautions for house-holder electrical safety. Domestic electrical supply configurations are out with the control of the employer and are the responsibility of the staff member. Employees will perform their assessment, and their line manager will then validate results during a discussion or remote visit. The employees will be expected to report any changes that may affect the arrangements in the future (in which case another assessment may be necessary).

### **Occasional Remote Working**

For occasional remote working, an employee works their contracted hours from the location specified in their contract of employment. However, on occasion, it may be necessary to work remotely. This can be effective when managing certain situations such as:

- Disruptions to dependants' care arrangements
- Project work
- Adverse weather
- Commuting disruptions
- An injury where the employee is fit to work but is unable to commute to their contractual work location

In all the above situations, work will be carried out effectively and efficiently with the appropriate resources, including an electronic device, e.g. laptop or tablet with sufficient broadband speed and functioning phone.

All situations for occasional remote working will be discussed individually with the employee's line manager, and they will consider the request balancing employee and business pressures and provide a decision.

### **Costs/Allowances**

Employees who on occasion work remotely will not have expenses approved for items such as for paper/ink/subsistence/internet services/wear and tear on equipment. The saving in time and money getting to/from work is a reasonable notional offset to any minimal personal costs of occasionally working remotely.

### **Contractual Remote Working**

Contractual remote working can occur in the following circumstances:

1. Making a Flexible Working Request: An employee with the required continuous service can request via their statutory entitlement to request Flexible Working.
2. Organisational Culture and Practice: Where Clydesdale Housing Association promotes regular remote working for all where it is practical, meets the needs of Clydesdale Housing Association and individual employees.

### **Flexible Working Request**

Employees wishing to request remote working as a contractual arrangement can discuss the request with their line manager and follow up with a formal request in writing following Clydesdale Housing Association's Flexible Working Policy. The process outlined in the policy will be followed. Any decision to accept or reject the application will be based on Clydesdale Housing Association's business needs and requirements at the time of the request and, in line with Clydesdale Housing Association's Flexible Working Policy. Any change to the employee's working arrangement would be regarded as a permanent contractual change and therefore, must be confirmed in writing. Due to the change being permanent, a 3-6 month (depending on the nature of the role) trial period will take place first before any permanent change takes effect.

### **Organisational Culture**

Clydesdale Housing Association wishes to embrace the significant benefits remote working can bring such as:

- the efficiency of performance
- health and wellbeing of employees and
- the positive environmental impact through reduced commuting

Clydesdale Housing Association supports a culture of remote working as a permanent contractual arrangement as long as business and service delivery needs are met and enhanced. Clydesdale Housing Association trusts its employees to fulfil their contractual obligations concerning their job role. Whether an employee is working remotely or, at Clydesdale Housing Association's location, the expectation on performance standards remains the same.

Clydesdale Housing Association believes a model of blended working is best. This means a mixture of remote and onsite working, which brings the most benefits for both business and employees. It allows for continuing face to face social interaction, collaboration, along with enjoying the benefits of remote working. For this reason, remote working will be for between 1-3 days per week (pro-rata).

Clydesdale Housing Association appreciates that not all employees would like to work remotely, some employees may prefer to attend the office for their working week. Any employee who wishes to continue to come to their original work location can continue to do so.

Section managers will discuss with employees how remote working arrangements will work within teams and sections, including any rota for office cover and existing working patterns. Once agreed between employees and the appropriate manager confirmation will be provided in writing.

Any permanent changes to a work location is a contractual change of employment and agreement will always be sought in the first instance.

### **Trial Periods**

At the end of a trial period, the arrangement will either be amended or confirmed. The decision at the end of the period will not be a surprise; this will be due to regular communication on the effectiveness of the working arrangement throughout the trial. Any adjustments can be made during the trial and can be put forward by the line manager or by employees.

### **Contractual changes**

If contractual remote working has been agreed, *Clydesdale Housing Association* will write to the employee to confirm the change and any associated terms with the change.

### **Costs/Allowances**

*Clydesdale Housing Association* will contribute towards remote working expenses such as:

- Reimbursing any reasonable cost that the member of staff pays for themselves such as postage or ad hoc costs which would otherwise be provided by the Association.
- Items required which are identified through a home working risk assessment.

There may be expenses that can be claimed directly by employees from HMRC. Please refer to HMRC website for the most up to date information.

## Recording the days of working from home

All staff members must record all days worked from home on the Overview calendar in Outlook.

Clydesdale Housing Association reserves the right to withdraw the home working arrangement for business reasons at any time, with immediate effect.

## Travel Expenses

Work-related travel expenses will be paid at the rate stated in your terms and conditions of employment, and as specified in Clydesdale Housing Association's Expenses policy.

## Performance Management

Clydesdale Housing Association has a culture of trust and respect for all. Performance Management will be carried out in the same way as if employees were in the office. As in the office, if the quality or volume of work while working remotely is not at the required standard, this will be addressed via Clydesdale Housing Association's performance management process initially on an informal basis. Matters will be managed confidentially with individual employees.

## Cyber Security

Working from home and remote system access can provide great business benefits but exposes the organisation to new risks that need to be managed. To do this the Association needs to identify and assess the risks and establish policies and procedures that support home or mobile working or remote access to systems that are applicable to users.

### What is the risk?

Home working and remote access extends the transit and storage of information (or operation of systems) outside of the corporate infrastructure, typically over the Internet. Mobile devices may also be used in spaces that are subject to additional risks such as oversight of screens (shoulder surfing), or the theft/loss of devices.

It is important that all staff and Committee members dealing with Association business follow sound mobile working and remote access practices. To protect the organisation from risk and all users must be aware of the following risks and ensure that they guard against these at all times:

- **Loss or theft of the device:** Mobile devices are highly vulnerable to being lost or stolen, potentially offering access to sensitive information or systems. They are often used in open view in locations that cannot offer the same level of physical security as your own premises.
- **Being overlooked:** Some users may have to work in public open spaces, or in premises/places where there are other people present, where they are vulnerable to being observed when working. This can potentially compromise sensitive information or authentication credentials.
- **Loss of credentials:** If user ID/credentials (such as username, password) are stored with a device used for remote working or remote access and it is lost or

stolen, the attacker could use those credentials to compromise services or information stored on (or accessible from) that device.

- **Tampering:** if the device is left unattended, an attacker may attempt to subvert the security controls on the device through the insertion of malicious software or hardware. This may allow them to monitor all user activity on the device, including authentication credentials.

### **Maintaining Awareness:**

All users will be trained on the use of their mobile device for the locations they will be working in. Users will be supported to look after their mobile device and operate it securely by following clear procedures. This will include direction on:

- secure storage and management of user credentials
- incident reporting
- situational/environmental awareness (the risks from being overlooked by others, etc.)

### **Data Protection**

When working from home data protection can be particularly challenging. Below are some tips to help deal with this:

- Follow the Association's policies, procedures and guidance particularly the ICT Policy.
- Only use technology (hardware or software) that has been approved by the Association as this will provide the best protection for personal data
- As you may be sharing your home working space with other family members always consider confidentiality and try to hold conversations where others are less likely to overhear. Where possible position your screen where it is less likely to be overseen.
- At home it is unlikely that you will have confidential waste bins. Always keep hard copy documents in a safe and secure place until you can take them into the office to dispose of them securely
- Don't mix data from the workplace with your own personal data. All staff will be provided with secure technology to work with. Staff must not use their own device for work purposes.
- To avoid the loss or theft of personal data, please put paperwork and devices away at the end of the working day if possible
- Be extra vigilant about opening web links and attachments in emails or other messages. Don't click on unfamiliar web links or attachments claiming to give you important coronavirus updates. If you receive any suspicious emails then please report these to Sabre Systems as soon as possible
- Use strong passwords, whether using online storage, a laptop or some other technology, it's important to make your passwords hard to guess.
- Communicate securely, use only the communication facilities provided to you by Clydesdale Housing Association.

### **Technical Support**

Clydesdale Housing Association's IT infrastructure is capable of supporting remote working and gives employees remote access to calendars, phones, e-mails and documents. Employees are required to have their broadband at sufficient speed in place and pay for it. Clydesdale Housing Association will, where practical, provide the appropriate equipment and software to allow people to work remotely.

It will be required that employees have the necessary firewall and anti-virus software installed on their remote computers, to protect *Clydesdale Housing Association's* IT systems from any harm.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in September 2026 and will be merged with CHA's Blended Working Policy at that time, or earlier if required by legislation.



## **Appendix 1 - Health & Safety Checklist**

Clydesdale Housing Association's health & safety checklist for employees working remotely. This list is not exhaustive and should be used in conjunction with section 3.20 of the Health and Safety Manual.

### **Electrical Equipment**

The safety and maintenance of the domestic electrical supply/installation is the responsibility of the house-holder. Clydesdale Housing Association will only take maintenance responsibility for any equipment it directly supplies.

#### **House-holder checklist:**

- Ensure electrical equipment is turned off when not in use and before performing any checks
- Check plugs are not damaged
- Check domestic electrical supply is suitable for the equipment in use
- Check plugs are correctly wired and that the outer cable covering is gripped at the point it enters the plug or equipment.
- Check outer covers of equipment are sound and have no loose parts or missing screws
- Check all leads and cables routinely against damage to the outer covers
- Check for burn marks or other signs of overheating
- Repair any electrical equipment with the potential to harm
- Check and secure all trailing wires – the best way is to use power outlets nearest to the equipment. Where this is not possible tuck trailing wires securely under desks etc. and out of typical walkways
- Do not have young children unsupervised in any area where you are using electrical equipment

### **Working with VDU's**

Clydesdale Housing Association's self-assessment tool will be used to ensure workstations are set up appropriately.